THE DAYSPRING.

"The dayspring from on high hath visited us."

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ADA'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

ON the first page is a picture of Ada Perkins, as she looked into her new dinner-basket on Christmas morning. She had been asking her mother for a long time to buy her one, that she might carry her dinner to school in it on stormy days, and stay at noon. Her mother put her off until she began to think that the basket never would be given her; but, behold, on Christmas morning she found beside her stocking — which she had hung up the night before, hoping that Santa Claus would put a few nuts and raisins, and perhaps a doll, into it — just the kind of a basket she had asked for so many times.

We suppose that our young readers will want to know what Ada sees in the basket; for it is certain that she is looking at something. She sees four nice, fresh figs, and six red peppermints, as large as the bottom of a good-sized ink-stand. We dare say that many children received more costly presents at Christmas; but Mrs. Perkins is a widow, who earns a living for herself and daughter by taking in sewing. She gave as good a present as she could afford, and a very pretty and useful one. Ada is as much pleased with it as Mary Rogers is with the gold watch her father gave her; for Mary often has handsome presents, while Ada has but few. She says that she is going to keep the basket nice, and be a good girl until it is worn out. We hope that she and all the readers of the "Dayspring" will be good, not only while their Christmas presents last, but all their lives.

For The Dayspring.

LITTLE FIGURES.

CHAPTER I.

BY MARY C. BARTLETT.

MOTHER wants me to keep a journal.

"What! write every day?" I exclaim. "How can I? Nothing remarkable ever happens to me. It would be the same old things over and over again. 'Matilda Woodbury's Journal!' The very sound of the name frightens me."

"Do not call it a journal, then. You need not write every day. But do not wait for great events. It's the little figures that make up the sum of our lives."

"If I ever *could* think of doing such a thing, mother, that's just what I'd call it, — 'Little Figures.' I shouldn't expect so much of myself then. Would you try it, really and *truly?* When shall I begin?"

"This evening."

"This evening! When almost every thing has gone wrong the whole day through?"

But mother still says, "This evening," — so, though it is getting late, I will make a beginning.

I may as well mention, at first, that our Marcia is the most careless girl that ever

was born. I put on my brown cashmere this morning, for I was going shopping with Angie Whitehouse at nine o'clock. I hoped no one would notice it, for I knew mother would think it foolish; but, the minute I came into the dining-room, Marcia exclaimed, "Dressed up, aren't you, Mat? What's on the carpet now?"

"You are," said I, crossly. Mother gave me a reproving glance, and Ruth looked amused.

I was a little late, and seated myself hurriedly; but that was no excuse for Marcia's upsetting her goblet of milk in my lap, — not the least.

"Oh, *dear!*" I cried, jumping up. "My dress is ruined now. Of course it'll have to come off, and I must wear my blue poplin, — short overskirt and all."

If Marcia had only cared, it wouldn't have seemed quite so hard. But she only said, as she saw me wiping up the milk, "Let Margaret bring some soap-suds. That'll take it out."

"*Soap-suds!*" I fairly *glared* at her through my tears.

"I wouldn't cry into it, at any rate," said she.

"You'll have milk and water, if you don't take care," said Ruth.

"I don't see how I happened to do it," began Marcia.

"Just as you *happen* to do *every thing*. You're the most careless" —

"Matilda!" Mother spoke then, and I subsided for a moment.

"*I* think your blue poplin is a very pretty dress," Marcia went on.

"That's as much as you know," said I. Marcia has no more idea of style than a child three years old. Not half as much as Bertie has, for he always wants his things to look just like Johnny Quimby's.

"I expect I was made for a sort of a torment," said she, dolefully.

"And you fulfil your mission. Your name ought to be 'Slam-bang,' or 'Splasher,' or something of the kind."

"Matilda!" That was mother again.

"Call me what you please, Mat," replied Marcia, rising from the table, and walking off in perfect good humor. If one could only make her downright angry, it would be some compensation. But, no: it seems to be her forte to provoke everybody else, and always keep the "sunshine of a sweet disposition" for herself. It isn't fair.

Well, I put on the old blue, leaving mother and Margaret at work upon the brown (and I may as well say here that the whole dress will have to be ripped up, and all sorts of turning and piecing done, just for Marcia's carelessness). If she's going to "continue as begun," I must have a new stock of clothes, — that's all.

Angie and I had a fine time shopping. What wouldn't I give to have as much money to spend as she has! But I won't be envious, — *that I'm detarmined*, — as Deacon Smiley says, — and, besides, I have a great many blessings that she hasn't. She has only her mother and grandfather; and I have papa, and darling little Bertie, and my two sisters, — Angie longs so much for a sister, I believe she'd be thankful even for Marcia.

After dinner, mother went out on an errand, and Margaret ran down town "for a little trip jist." We were all going to a little Sunday-school entertainment at the hall this evening. It was Bertie's first dissipation; so mother persuaded him to lie down in his crib, and have a nap, that he might be more ready to enjoy it. He had on his old suit. He had given it the finishing touch in the morning by tearing

a great "barn-door" in the frock, just below the collar; but mother thought it wasn't worth while to change it then. There he lay, looking as sweet as any ragged little fellow could, when the bell rang. I ran down to the door, and there stood our new minister, Mr. Kingsbury.

I am afraid I was dreadfully awkward, for I couldn't help thinking of what Angie said of her minister. "He calls me Miss Angeline, and is always talking with grandpa about the doctrine of election." What should I do if Mr. Kingsbury should begin on that with me?

But he didn't. He was so pleasant and kind that I forgot all my fears, and chatted away with him just as if he had been an old friend. He was so sorry not to find mother at home, and inquired if he hadn't seen two sisters of mine at church. I said "Yes," and went to call Ruth. I knew very well where I should find her, — curled up on the library lounge, with a book in her hand. I hoped I shouldn't find Marcia at all; for one never knows what she may do or say.

Ruth declared she wouldn't come a step. She never did like ministers, — they made her feel so solemn. While I was trying to persuade her, Marcia came bouncing in, slamming all the doors behind her.

"Who is it, who is it, Mat?" she asked, in that quick, impatient way that always makes me feel as if I didn't want to tell her a thing.

"The Rev. Mr. Kingsbury," answered Ruth. "Can't you go in and entertain him?"

"Of course I can."

She was rushing into the parlor, when I caught her by the arm. "Marcia Woodbury, look at your hair! And what *is* the matter with your dress?"

"Why, that mean Albert Eldridge put ashes all over Jimmie Phelan's coast. He did it just to tease him; for it's an out-of-the-way place, where hardly anybody goes. I've been sweeping it off for him."

Jimmie Phelan is a little Irish boy, who calls on "Marchy" occasionally for small bits of goodies which she saves up for him. Papa says it is a very pleasant thing to see those two together. Marcia has such a motherly interest in him, and he just devours her with his eyes. Always says "Yes, ma'am," and "No, ma'am," to her. All very beautiful, no doubt; but I did wish she had kept away from him this afternoon.

"Go upstairs and change your dress. Smooth your hair, and tie your ribbon straight," said I. "Be quick, if you want to see Mr. Kingsbury. Come, Ruth, you *must* come. You'll be very impolite if you don't."

Ruth made up a wry face; but rose, and took hold of my hand with great gravity.

"You goose!" said I. "Do you suppose I'm going to lead you in, as if you were a two-year old?"

"No," said she. "You'll introduce me as your sister, Miss Middling, and I shall sweep a courtesy, like this" (illustrating).

"*Don't* make me laugh. And *don't* giggle so, Marcia; he'll certainly hear you."

She ran off upstairs, and Ruth and I went into the parlor. There's this one thing about Ruth: provoking as she is sometimes, she always seems to know enough to be proper when it's *absolutely necessary*. So, though she rolled up her eyes, and hung back, pretending to be frightened to death, until we were upon the very threshold, I had no fears for her after we had crossed it.

How interesting Mr. Kingsbury was! He didn't say a word about election, or

any of those horrid things. We were having such a nice talk with him, when the door opened, and in walked Marcia, bringing in her arms — *would* you believe it? — *Bertie!* I suppose she had waked him up, rummaging 'round for her things. At any rate, there he was, — tumbled hair, sleepy eyes, torn frock, and all, — winking and blinking, and scowling as if he never meant to be pleasant again.

I could feel my cheeks tingling, and Ruth looked dreadfully mortified. I gave Marcia what she calls my *withering* look.

"I couldn't help it," said she. "He *would* come. He'd have screamed like a tiger if I *hadn't* brought him."

"Screamed like a tiger"! Our darling little Bertie!

"Mr. Kingsbury, this is my sister Marcia," said Ruth, remembering her manners.

Marcia gave him her left hand (Bertie was on her right arm), and sat down in an easy-chair.

It is strange that, with all her blundering, she never seems to be ill at ease. She never blushes for herself: other people have to do that for her. She never seems to think of herself, somehow. Perhaps that's the secret of it all. She hugged Bertie up to her, and seemed as motherly as if she'd been the oldest daughter instead of the youngest; and answered all Mr. Kingsbury's questions in such a bright, off-hand way, that I could see that he was really pleased with her.

Bertie began to show signs of thawing out after a while, and she was seized with a desire to exhibit all his accomplishments; but he was sensible, and wouldn't be shown off.

"It's too bad, Mr. Kingsbury!" cried Marcia. "He says 'Four and twenty black-birds' *so* cunning."

Mr. Kingsbury didn't doubt it. I wonder if ministers don't get tired sometimes of admiring other people's children.

All at once a brilliant idea came into Marcia's head. What did she do but poke her fingers through that horrid "barn-door," and make Bertie catch them. It was fine fun for those two, but *death* to Ruth and me.

"What a convenient old hole this is!" cried Marcia. "If I was mother, I'd let him wear this frock all the time."

"It's lucky for him you're not, then," said I.

"'Tain't my new clothes," remarked Bertie, confidentially, to Mr. Kingsbury. Then he slipped off Marcia's lap, and ran upstairs.

Our new minister seems to have a way of drawing people out. I can't imagine how I happened to tell him that I found it hard work to control my temper; but I did, and Marcia amused him very much by saying, —

"That isn't so very strange, Mr. Kingsbury, when she has *me* for a sister. I spilled a whole goblet of milk upon her dress this morning. That's the reason she has on that old blue now. She hates it because the overskirt is so" —

"O Marcia! please, don't." My cheeks were burning. I couldn't help laughing, though I didn't want to one bit. It was *so* provoking.

But the strangest thing was to have Ruth acknowledge that she disliked house-work, and did *occasionally* shirk her duties. Papa says that Ruth is the most reticent one of the family.

We had forgotten our mortification at Bertie's "rag-baggy looks," — as Marcia would put it, — when in he walked again, his face all smiles, and his new suit slung over his shoulder. He went up to Mr.

Kingsbury, and proudly displayed his pretty pocket and the bright buttons; but hardly knew whether to laugh or cry, when he found himself, suit and all, in the minister's lap.

I don't believe I shall ever be afraid of a "Reverend" again; but then, as Angie says, there *is* a difference.

After tea, there was "hurrying to and fro," to get ready for the entertainment. We all anticipated a great deal of pleasure; especially Ruth, who was to act in one of the charades, and Bertie, who expected all sorts of wonderful things, — he hadn't the least idea what. For a wonder, Marcia was ready first; and she begged so hard to be allowed to dress Bertie, that mamma at last consented.

Angie came in just at the last; and we had hardly time to snatch a kiss from mother, and rush off, before the clock struck seven. How we made Bertie's little feet fly over the snow! We were there in season, however. Ruth went through her performance beautifully. She came down to us afterward for congratulations.

"You are a credit to the family, Ruth," said Marcia.

"Nonsense!"

"You are. You're the blessing, and I am the bane."

"Do be still," said I. We were promenading then, and I thought everybody would hear.

"Yes'm." She looked down at Bertie as she spoke, and gave a little start.

"What's the matter?" said I.

"How *very* bright those gas jets are!" rolling her eyes upward.

"About the same as usual. What *is* the matter, Marcia?"

"I'll tell you when we get home, if you don't find out before. You'd better not inquire. Oh, *such* a joke!" and she went off in a perfect paroxysm of laughter.

"There's Mr. Kingsbury!" she exclaimed as soon as she could speak; and, before I could stop her, she had darted up to him, and was telling him something in the most animated way. He looked over at us, and laughed heartily; and, when I looked at him five minutes afterward, he was still smiling.

I thought Marcia might have told us; but there was so much to see and hear that I forgot all about it until, all at once, Bertie exclaimed, "I want my hankfiss! Why, where's my hankfiss, Mattie?"

"In your pocket," said I. "Sister put it there."

"Where *is* my pocket? Pocket's all dropped off!" he cried, in dismay. And, sure enough, where *was* that child's pocket?

The truth flashed upon me in an instant. This was Marcia's "joke." She had put on his frock hind side before. I turned him round, and, sure enough, there was the pocket, *hankfiss*, and all, in the middle of *his back*. How strange that we hadn't noticed it!

"Was there ever such a girl as Marcia Woodbury!" said I, speaking out before I thought. "She ought to be ashamed of herself."

"What's the matter?" asked Ruth.

"Look at Bertie! Did you ever see any thing so comical?"

"What a shame!" Then she leaned back against one of the settees, and laughed.

I tried to keep a sober face, but couldn't. It was too ridiculous. Bertie, standing there with that bunch in his back, looking up at me with the tears in his eyes. A child crying for his pocket! Could any thing be more pitiful? Still we laughed.

"I didn't—want—any pockets—in—my—back," he sobbed.

We both sobered in a moment. Bertie is one of the best children in the world; but, when he begins to cry, he generally makes a business of it. We were trying to sooth him, when Marcia sailed along, serene as a June morning.

"What's the matter with chickie-wickie?" she asked, sympathetically.

"He's lost his pocket," replied Ruth, severely. "Perhaps you know where it is."

"There! I knew you'd find it out. Can't he get along with it just for to-night?"

"He could if his arms were as long as yours," answered Ruth, sarcastically. Marcia's long arms are the greatest trouble of her life; and she declares it is no wonder they do so much mischief, there's so much of them.

"I want to *see* my pocket," sobbed Bertie.

"And you *shall* see your pocket," cried Marcia. "Don't cry, chickie! We'll turn the frock round in less than two minutes. Come, Mat, Angie, Ruth,—all of you. Come up in this corner, and make a fence round him, and I'll whisk it off in a second."

"Marcia Woodbury! Here, in this public hall?"

"What's the harm? No one will see."

"We might at least go into the dressing-room."

"It's full of girls. There's no room."

"You don't want to be undressed *here*, *do* you, Bertie?"

"I want—my—pocket."

"You'll have to do it," said Marcia. "He'll scream if you don't; won't you, Bertie?"

"Y-e-s," with alarming "premonitory signs."

"Come along, girls." And she actually persuaded us into a quiet retreat, and the frock was "whisked" off and on again before you could have counted twenty. She was fumbling away among the buttons, when Mr. Kingsbury came up.

"This seems an exclusive little circle," said he, seeing us so close together.

"Yes, sir, it is," we answered, laughing.

"It's a fence. Don't look over," exclaimed Marcia. "Wait a minute," and she soon appeared in triumph, leading Bertie, who had one hand in his precious pocket, but clung to her with the other, as if she were the best friend he had in the world.

"It's all right now," said she, complacently. "Sister Marcia found his pocket for him, didn't she?"

"Who hides, finds," said Mr. Kingsbury, pleasantly, as he moved away.

But of course Bertie didn't understand that. Marcia was his benefactor, and his chosen companion for the rest of the evening.

"Marcia is usually equal to the occasion," laughed papa, when we told him of our funny time.

"She usually *makes* the occasion," replied mother, with a little sigh. "I am sorry she is so heedless."

"O mother, mother! How I wish, for your sake, that we could *always* be good!"

To be continued.

WHO'S THE DARLING LITTLE GIRL?

WHO'S the darling little girl
Everybody loves to know?
She it is whose acts and thoughts
All are pure as whitest snow.

Who's the darling little girl
Everybody loves to see?
She it is whose sunny face
Is as sweet as sweet can be.

Who's the darling little girl
Jesus Christ will surely love?
She it is, who, meek and good,
Daily grows like him above.

WHY THEY OFTEN FAIL.

YOUNG men often fail to get on in this world because they neglect small opportunities. Not being faithful in little things, they are not promoted to the charge of greater things. A young man who gets a subordinate situation sometimes thinks it is not necessary for him to give it much attention. He will wait till he gets a place of responsibility, and then he will show people what he can do. This is a very great mistake. Whatever his situation may be, he should master it in all its details, and perform all its duties faithfully. The habit of doing his work thoroughly and conscientiously is what is most likely to enable a young man to make his way. With this habit, a person of only ordinary abilities would outstrip one of greater talents who is in the habit of slighting subordinate matters. But, after all, the mere adoption by a young man of this great essential rule of success shows him to be possessed of superior abilities.

SPEAK KINDLY.

A YOUNG lady had gone out to take a walk; she forgot to take her purse with her, and had no money in her pocket. Presently she met a little girl with a basket on her arm.

"Please, miss, will you buy something from my basket?" said the little girl, showing a variety of book-marks, watch-cases, needle-books, &c.

"I'm sorry I can't buy any thing to-day," said the young lady. "I haven't any money with me. Your things look very pretty." She stopped a moment, and spoke a few kind words to the little girl; and then, as she passed, she said again, "I'm very sorry I can't buy any thing from you to-day."

"O miss!" said the little girl, "you've done me just as much good as if you had. Most persons that I meet say, 'Get away with you!' but you have spoken kindly to me, and I feel a heap better."

That was "considering the poor." How little it costs to do that! Let us learn to speak kindly and gently to the poor and the suffering. If we have nothing else to give, let us, at least, give them our sympathy.

"Speak gently, kindly to the poor;
Let no harsh tone be heard:
They have enough they must endure,
Without an unkind word.

"Speak gently; for 'tis like the Lord,
Whose accents meek and mild
Bespoke him as the Son of God,
The gracious, holy child."

Carrier-Dove.

LIVE to be useful; live to give light; live to accomplish the end for which you were made; and quietly and steadily shine on, trying to do your duty.

GOD, the perfect good, is the patron of all goodness. He asks for all kinds of excellence, for emotions and acts, for prayers and character, for the labor that extends religious truth and secular good.

THERE came recently to the New York post-office a letter directed simply to "God." When opened, it was found to be evidently from a little girl, and ran thus: "Dear God, we are very poor. My brother needs a new coat very much. Won't you please send him one? and then I shall worry no more about it." The letter was put into the hands of certain good ladies. They sent to the town in Massachusetts whence the letter came, and found the case genuine. Probably the little girl's prayer has been answered by this time.

CAMPING OUT.

THESE three children, George Jones, Sarah Jones, and Emily Jones, are playing "Camp out." They know that people sometimes live in tents at the sea shore and at the mountains in summer. They have heard that soldiers sometimes live in tents. Their cousins, Charlie and Willie Jones, have a tent which they pitch near their house, in the warm season, and take a great deal of pleasure in playing under it. So these children, who had played a great many things in the course of the day, thought at last that they would play "Camp out." They have spread their father's umbrella in the parlor in front of the grate, and pinned their mother's shawl to one side of it; for George said that it would be "all top and no sides," unless they did so.

Little Emily is lying on the floor, resting her head on something that she calls a pillow. Sarah is under the tent, but not quite ready to lie down. George is standing beside it, lifting up one corner of the shawl, and looking under to see what his sisters are doing. He has a little whip in his hand, but we do not believe that he will strike his sisters with it. He has it to "play horse" with, when he is out of doors. How bright and happy Sarah and Emily look! We hope that these children will amuse themselves in this pretty way for a long time.

For The Dayspring.

SALLIE'S SURPRISE.

A TRUE STORY, IN THREE PARTS.

BY J. H. W.

PART III.

The Cat out of the Bag.

WE say "The cat is out of the bag," when a secret is discovered. Sallie's secret was not discovered against her will, but because the right time had come. The cat was out because she was ready to open the bag, and let grimalkin jump.

As already narrated, the audience was assembled in the second flat of Nuns' Edifice, all ready to see the show.

Meanwhile the performers were running about, and trying to fulfil their double duties, set down in the programme, as officers and players. A few spectators had not arrived, and the children even asked Father Ambleton's advice as to whether they should begin or wait. He advised them to begin.

"Always be on time," he said; "and let the people with three hands take the consequences."

"People with three hands, papa?" laughed Sallie.

"Why, yes; did you never hear the story?"

"What is it?"

"Why, that some people are not only right-handed or left-handed, but are always a little *behind-handed.*"

The children followed this advice; and, after considerable bustle, the doors were opened, and there stood Bobby Witness and Braxley, the two little busy bees (B's). They were to sing "Hold the Fort," for the overture; but, instead of singing, they stood silent, and looked bashfully at one another, as if more ready to cry than sing. In vain did Sallie, from behind the door, urge them, in nervous whispers, to begin. Bobby put his finger in his mouth, and held down his close-cropped head of dark hair, while Braxley shook his golden curls in sweet embarrassment. Sallie was just ready to cry over the impending failure in the very first part of her programme, when papa came to her relief. Braxley had been taught to obey; and so, when his father said, "No nonsense, now; sing, sing right along," he choked back the shy tears, and tried hard to sing. He did not succeed very well till papa began the tune, and then he finished it quite creditably. To be sure, he made some queer work with the words. Instead of "Ho, my comrades!" he said, "Holy comet." "Waving in the sky," he turned into "wading," which would be more appropriate to *water* than *sky*. Instead of "Victory is nigh," he sang, "Victoria is now." Then, in the chorus, for "Jesus signals still," he sang, "Cheer the signal still," evidently knowing that a *flag* was a *signal*, and that people talk much about cheering "the old flag." After all, he sang as distinctly as most grown people. How seldom can the words be understood! He was abashed by the applause, but, recovering himself, he repeated the verse. The doors closed, but the hearers clapped so loudly that they opened again. This time, there stood Braxley, with the strings of a little white cap tied under his chin and around his sunny face. His papa called him "Sunshine" when he was good, and "Thundercloud" when he was naughty. Beside him stood Sallie, also wearing a white cap and apron, with a white handkerchief folded around her neck. At first, Braxley looked thunder-cloudy rather than sunshiny; but, when papa said, "Which is it, little chap,

clouds or sunshine?" he brightened up, and said, "Sunshine, papa;" and then he and Sallie sang their song together. It was a song which Mr. Ambleton had learned of the Shakers, and taught the children. They were dressed like Shakers, and while they sang they looked very prim, and beat time with their hands and feet. Here are the words of the song: —

"God is infinitely able
To sustain the weak and feeble,
And to meet the demands
Of the needy and poor.
Though I wade in deep waters,
Yet with fasting, prayer, and watching,
He will safely, safely lead me
To an unbroken shore.
O Canaan, fair Canaan,
Golden days bespeak thy future!
I behold the thousand hills
Whereon graze thy flocks and herds.
All Israel is before me,
Clad in vestments of bright glory,
And I hear their sounds of victory,
And feel power in their word."

They sang the last "word" loud and long. This piece, too, the hearers wished to have repeated.

Then the bell rang, and the doors closed. After a deal of confusion, the bell rang again, and the doors swung open. This time it was Sallie's play; and now it appeared why the girls and boys had been dressed in clothes too old for them.

In scene first, there were Sallie and Eddie. She had put on a long dress of her mother's, and now appeared as *Mrs. Fairweather*. He was *Mr. Fairweather;* and had sprinkled flour on his hair, and wore a dressing-gown, to make him look old enough to be the father of *Mary*, whose affairs they were discussing. Two callers came in, Artie and Tallie, as *Mr. Corkoise* and *Mr. Michelle*. It appeared that both of them proposed marrying *Mary Fairweather*. The choice being left with her, she accepted the invitation of both suitors to take a walk, and disappeared, holding each by the arm.

In scene second, it appeared that *Mary* had "chosen the good part which should not be taken from her," namely, *Mr. Michelle*. The other lover was disconsolate; but the sly old folks planned that he should meet their young friend *Hattie Lucas* at the wedding, and they hoped that he would "become interested in her," as *Mary* was "not for him." Then came the wedding, which was the grand scene of the play. All the children were dressed like grown-up folks. Dora Witness, as the bride, was gorgeously apparelled in a long white veil, while in her hands she bore an artificial bouquet. Here Pattie's powers were called into requisition. As orchestra, she played a harmonica behind the door, while the people on the stage walked about. The tune was somewhat rambling; but the blowing was vigorous.

Myra, the prompter, had all she could do in this scene. There were so many players that they often spoke in the wrong place. At the proper time, Pattie dropped her harmonica, and rushed upon the scene as waiter. She was dressed as a boy, and a pretty little fellow she made, with her masculine integuments. Into the closet, which was supposed to represent another room, she went, and presently reappeared, bearing a tray, upon which were glasses containing bits of chocolate candy, supposed to represent chocolate ice-cream. There had been some thought of having strawberries in glasses, for strawberry ice-cream; but finally the berries were reserved for another purpose, as you will presently see. Then Pattie rushed out again, and blew as hard as she could on the harmonica, and again the wedding guests marched about. In the midst of the prom-

enade, Myra rang the bell, and she and Pattie shut the doors.

As the couple were happily wedded, the auditors imagined that this was the end of the story; but it was not. In the next scene, *Mr. Corkoise* had, as requested, fallen in love with *Hattie*, and so far all was well; but grief came into the drama with Pattie Dieufree, who this time appeared as *Sam Jones*, a villain of the deepest dye. *Sam* took *Mary Michelle* by the hand, as she was walking in the street, and ran away with her. Her husband and parents started in hot pursuit, and so did her friend *Hattie*. *Mr. Corkoise* fancied that it was *Hattie* who had run away with *Sam*, instead of *Mary*, and was disconsolate accordingly; but he united in Hymen's pursuit, and their joint efforts restored *Mary* to home and peace.

The dialogue was not plentiful; and, when the bell rang again, and the doors were shut, Sallie was amazed to find that her play, which had taken so long to write, was so soon over.

The performance, however, was not yet concluded. There was the Salmagundi to come. Dora recited a poem, called "Stop and Think." Tallie and Artie had a dialogue about "Going to California." Sallie once more appeared, and read a dog story; after which she thanked the visitors for their attention, and announced that the performance was over, but begged them to remain a few moments in their seats, as there was to be something more. She also told them that she was sorry the entertainment was so short; and assured them that, if she had not supposed her play would take more time to act, there would have been other songs and recitations in the show. Then she felt as if she must say something more, she hardly knew what, and so she closed her speech thus: "Ladies and gentlemen, we thank you for — for — for" — Here Sallie was unable to think of the right word. She blushed, and looked confused, as she was; but at last she found a word that would do, and she gasped out, "Thank you for visiting."

Then arose a demand that the two four-year olders should once more "Hold the Fort;" which they did.

This time, Braxley needed no help from his papa; but he was sadly provoked when one of the ladies mistook him for a girl instead of a boy, and said, "How much that pretty little girl looks like her mother!" When Braxley heard this, he spoke out in the middle of the song, so that the ditty ran: "Hold the fort for I — (I ain't a little *girl;* I'm a boy) — am coming, Jesus signals still."

Amidst the good-humor which followed, Eddie came out, with a box of strawberries, which were just coming into market, and wanted everybody to guess how many berries there were in the box, and pay five cents each for the privilege of guessing. Whoever came nearest the right number should have the strawberries. Everybody paid the five cents, and guessed. One said seventy-five; another, a hundred; another, one hundred and one. Mrs. Witness guessed one hundred and twenty, and Mrs. Ambleton one hundred and twenty-five. There were as many guesses as there were people. The highest guess of all was one hundred and thirty-five. This was father's conjecture. The berries had already been counted; they numbered two hundred and sixteen; and, as Mr. Ambleton's guess was nearest the mark, though eighty-one too small, the treasures were awarded to him. As the whole show had been prepared in honor of his birth-day, this result gave general satisfaction.

With congratulations to Sallie on the success of the surprise, the company went

away; though a few of the children stayed to supper with Sallie, and shared the strawberries.

Are the larger schemes of after-life ever so gratifying as those of childhood's innocent ignorance?

It is but fair to tell you that Mrs. Ambleton was very glad when the cat was out of the bag, and Sallie's secret was no longer a secret, and the birth-day show of precocious dramatics was well over with; but everybody agreed that the cat was as good-looking and well-behaved a cat as ever was let out of the bag by a miss of eleven years on her father's birth-day.

DAY AND NIGHT.

I.

"IT is dark; the night is come,
And the world is hushed and dumb.
Sleep, my darling; God is here."
"Shall I see Him, mother dear?"
"It is day; the sun is bright,
And the world is laid in light.
Wake, my darling; God is here"
"Shall I see Him, mother dear?"

II.

"Not the day's awakening light,
Babe, can show thee God aright;
Not the dark that brings thee sleep
Him can from my darling keep.
Day and night are His to fill;
We are His, to do His will;
Do His will, and, never fear,
Thou shalt see Him, baby dear."

Matthew Browne.

For The Dayspring.

THE MIDNIGHT FIRE.

IT was the middle of the night, and the inhabitants of a quiet country town were, almost without exception, wrapped in sleep. All seemed safe and peaceful; but in a dwelling, at a distance from the village, one of the most fearful perils, fire, was lurking; creeping stealthily and surely on, and up toward the chambers where the father, mother, and children were all fast asleep, — not even a disturbing dream warning them of danger. On and on crept the flame; the lower rooms filled with smoke. On and on it crept, laying greedy hold of furniture and carpets, books and pictures, things of beauty and comfort, the gifts of friends, the household treasures of happy years; on and on, toward the human life, more precious than all. Must that, too, be lost?

The house must go: the fierce flames are all around it, and bursting through door and casement, with blinding, suffocating smoke. Still they sleep on, — the family so happy, hitherto, in their pleasant home and its dear affections. Will nothing arouse them? There are no near neighbors; no passer-by, on that quiet, lonely road, sees their awful peril.

But God is over all, and he never slumbers. Will he not save them? Will not his pitying love send, in some way, succor or warning? If an angel might fly down on silent wings, and touch those slumbering eyelids! Angels came in olden time: can they not now?

Yes; they can and do. In many ways, in many guises, our Father sends the angels of his mercy. He sent a helper, a deliverer, to that imperilled home; one not the less welcome, none the less sure, that he came not on silvery wings, or sandalled feet, or in any angel-guise, but in the rough, shaggy form of their faithful dog.

He made his way, through fire and smoke, to his master's bedside; sprang upon the bed, and, by lapping his face and barking, quickly aroused him, and the family were saved. This is a true story.

M. O. J.

THE SNOW-STORM.

LOOK at this picture. See the great white snow-flakes come down. See how much snow there is on the buildings and on the ground. Farmer Smith has just driven his cattle to water, and now he is driving them to the barn again. His son, John, is clearing away the snow in front of the barn. His two daughters, Mary and Fannie, are just coming from school.

What fun it is to see the snow fall, and to see it on the ground and fences and trees and buildings! What nice sport it is to wade through it, and to build snow-houses and forts, and to snow-ball, and to coast, and to take a sleigh-ride! It would not be pleasant to have snow on the ground all the time; but it is very pleasant in winter. How much the change of the seasons adds to our happiness! We have spring, when the trees and plants burst forth into new life. Then we have summer, with its waving grass and beautiful flowers, and long, warm days. Then we have autumn, with its ripened fruits and many-colored foliage, and clear, cool weather. Then we have winter, when the streams and ponds are frozen, and the ground is covered with snow. There is more beauty in each of the seasons than we can enjoy. Every day in the year brings a great deal with it to make our hearts glad. How thankful, then, we ought to be to Him who makes the seasons and the days, and who fills our lives with good!

How can we show our gratitude to God for the goodness and love with which He blesses us every day? We can love Him with all our heart; we can praise Him with joyful songs; we can thank Him for His goodness; we can obey our parents, love our brothers and sisters and friends, be generous to the poor, and kind to all the creatures he has made, as he bids us. In all of these ways we can show our gratitude to God.

For The Dayspring.

LITTLE BRIGHT EYES.

THE children were all fast asleep;
And I, with a book in my hand,
Was only pretending to read,
While my thoughts were half in dream-land.
For the house was so wonderful still,
After the romps went away;
And perhaps I was weary, as well,
With all the noise and the play.

Well, there as I sat by the fire,
What do you think I should see
But a pair of little bright eyes,
Peeping so knowing at me.
Yes, a pair of the brightest of eyes!
I wondered how they came there;
I wondered what it could be
Under the great easy-chair.

But I spoke never a word;
I thought 'twas a brownie, maybe,
Waiting till I fell asleep,
To play some prank upon me.
Or else 'twas a fairy, perhaps,
Now winter had killed all the flowers,
Who hid 'neath the great easy-chair,
And slept through the sunny hours.

Yet a pair of little bright eyes
Was the only thing I could see:
I rubbed my own in surprise, —
I thought I was dreaming, maybe.
And then I sat perfectly still,
Nor was there a sound in the house,
When, all at once, 'neath the chair,
Peeped forth a little brown mouse.

A wee, little, soft, brown mouse, —
I knew 'twas afraid to come,
Out from its dark hiding-place,
To pick up even a crumb.
And I thought the rogues now asleep,
Who dropped those crumbs from their plate,
Might learn from this little brown mouse
As quiet and patient to wait.

RIPPLE.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

TOM, A HOME STORY. By George L. Chaney, author of "F. Grant & Co; or Partnerships." Boston: Roberts Brothers. 1877. Price $1.25.

A GREAT EMERGENCY, AND OTHER TALES. By Juliana Horatia Ewing, author of "Six to Sixteen," "Jan of the Windmill," &c., &c. Boston: Roberts Brothers. 1877. Price $1.25.

JOLLY GOOD TIMES AT SCHOOL: also, Some Times not quite so Jolly. By P. Thorne, author of "Jolly Good Times; or, Child-Life on a Farm." Boston: Roberts Brothers. 1877. Price $1.25.

AUNT JOE'S SCRAP-BAG, My Girls, &c., &c. Vol. IV. By Louisa M. Alcott, author of "Little Women," "An Old-Fashioned Girl," "Little Men," "Hospital Sketches," "Eight Cousins," &c. Boston: Roberts Brothers. 1878. Price $1.00.

We know of no house which publishes so large a proportion of good books as that of Roberts Brothers. The four above named are all good; and we would gladly speak in praise of each separately, if we had space. They are admirably adapted to children, and should find their way at once into every Sunday-school library.

ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS IN RELIGION. Six lectures delivered in the Music Hall, Boston, by James Freeman Clarke. Boston: American Unitarian Association, 7 Tremont Place. 1878.

These Lectures drew a crowd to Music Hall to hear them, and, we are confident, will find a host of readers in the attractive form in which they have now been published. The titles of the Lectures are: "Faith and Belief, — Essential Belief concerning God," "Christ and Chris-

tianity," "The Bible," "The Church and Worship," "Christian Experience," "The Future Life." We are glad that they are published at a price which places them within the reach of everybody: fifty cents, bound in cloth; twenty-five cents, in paper.

THE YEAR-BOOK OF THE UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES FOR 1878. Boston: American Unitarian Association, 7 Tremont Place.

This work contains a "List of Societies with their ministers," a "List of Ministers with their Residences," a list of "Missionary Associations," "Conferences," "Ministerial Associations," and a great deal of other information of interest to Unitarians. The selections of "Good Words, Old and New," are a valuable addition to the book.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS for January contain Lessons XIX.—XXII. of the series on the Old Testament. The titles of these four Lessons are "From Sinai to the Jordan," "Death of Moses — Review," "Joshua," "The Last Days of Joshua." Published by the Unitarian Sunday-School Society, 7 Tremont Place, Boston. Specimen copies sent on application.

Puzzles.

ENIGMA.

I am composed of twenty letters.
My 2, 19, 14, 9, 16, is what we live in.
My 10, 5, 6, 7, is opposite of short.
My 4, 8, 1, is a domestic animal.
My 12, 19, 15, 8, is "where'er the heart is."
My 17, 13, 11, 2, 9, a tribe of ancient barbarians.
My 12, 14, 10, what savages live in.
My 20, 16, 6, 7, is a romantic place.
My 3, 19, 14, is a pronoun.
My whole is a question put by the Saviour.

J. C. M.

HIDDEN RIVERS.

Do not jam Esther's hat.
Fred and I are going fishing.
Please do not get behind us.
When are you going to London?
That poor girl is blind.

A. A. N.

A CENTRAL ACROSTIC.

o o O o o
o o O o o
o o O o o
o o O o o
o o O o o
o o O o o

The first row represents a beast of burden common in the East. It is called "the ship of the desert." The second row, the sad condition of Bartimeus. The third, the name of one of the patriarchs. The fourth, an herb which was carefully tithed. The fifth, the fetters with which the Philistines bound Samson. The sixth, one of the apostles.

The central vertical represents the name of a woman famous in the Old Testament.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN DECEMBER NUMBER.

ENIGMA.

"Merry Christmas."

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

1. T rut H
2. H iberni A
3. A ntwer P
4. N i P
5. K entuck Y
6. S i N
7. G rap E
8. I ce-sa W
9. V otar Y
10. I dl E
11. N iagar A
12. G overno R

Thanksgiving. — Happy New Year.

THE DAYSPRING.

(Rev. George F. Piper, Editor),

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